

IL 19-99-001  
In Reply Refer To: 193B3

May 27, 1999

## CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER LETTER

### GENERIC MAILBOXES INFORMATION LETTER

1. Generic mailboxes have been established at each Veterans Health Administration (VHA) location for receipt of general correspondence via Exchange. Currently, most routine information is sent directly to the personal Exchange mailboxes of network and medical center directors. A need has been identified to have routine correspondence sent instead to a generic mailbox at each facility. This mailbox would be monitored by local staff, and messages would be distributed to the appropriate local recipients.
2. The use of generic mailboxes will relieve network and medical center directors from sorting through all of the routine correspondence to find their personal mail. This mechanism is designed to improve the dissemination of routine information. Initially, offices will continue to address action items as they do now (e.g., Exchange, fax, or surface mail). However, as described in subparagraph 6g, action items could be distributed via email from EDMS to a generic mailbox. Once the generic mail distribution mechanism is active and working smoothly, the dissemination of action items will be addressed.
3. Each facility should designate three to five delegates to the local VHA Daily Mail mailbox. These people will be responsible for reviewing incoming mail to the facility VHA Daily Mail mailbox and disseminating the messages appropriately.
4. **Mechanism.** Technical consideration was given to creating a system that would be easy to administer and would not overwhelm the Exchange system or the network. The design of the system takes advantage of the hierarchical structure of the backbone Exchange enterprise, so that messages sent to a higher-level organizational unit will be automatically transmitted to lower-level units as well. Mail can be sent to a single facility or network, or to a business unit which includes multiple facilities or networks. The facility-level mailboxes have been grouped into Exchange distribution lists by organizational business unit (for example, VHA Headquarters, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), and Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP)). There is also an overall distribution list named VHA Daily Mail, which includes all of the other business unit distribution lists. Mail sent to VHA Daily Mail will filter down through the business unit distribution lists to all VHA locations.
5. **Naming Conventions.** Generic mailboxes are organized into three levels. The first level mailbox is named "VHA Daily Mail." Mail sent to VHA Daily Mail will be sent to all VHA locations. The second level is the business unit level. Mailbox names for

business unit distribution lists begin with “VHA Daily Mail”, followed by the name of the business unit (e.g., VHA Daily Mail OCIO, VHA Daily Mail VISN 01, VHA Daily Mail CMOP). Mail sent to business unit distribution lists will be sent to all field stations within that business unit. The third level is the facility or network level. Mailboxes at this level are named by specifying a field station after the business unit name (e.g., VHA Daily Mail VISN 13 Black Hills).

a. All distribution lists and mailboxes will be established by the VHA National Exchange Administrators. Information will flow from the top down according to the following hierarchy.



b. The following are examples of business unit distribution list mailbox names:

- (1) VHA Daily Mail HQ (denotes membership of all VHA Headquarters entities).
- (2) VHA Daily Mail VISN 13 (denotes membership of all facilities in VISN 13).
- (3) VHA Daily Mail CMOP (denotes membership of all CMOP locations).

c. The following are examples of field station mailbox names:

- (1) VHA Daily Mail VISN 13 Black Hills.
- (2) VHA Daily Mail VISN 13 Minneapolis.
- (3) VHA Daily Mail VISN 13 Network Office.
- (4) VHA Daily Mail CMOP Hines.
- (5) VHA Daily Mail CMOP Dallas.

## 6. Guidelines for Usage

a. **Routine Information.** The generic mailboxes will be used for routine information only, not for action items. Action items will continue to be disseminated as they are currently. Once the generic mail mechanism is active and working smoothly, the workgroup will address the dissemination of action items via generic mailboxes. All

facilities will be notified prior to any action items being universally disseminated through this generic mailbox system.

b. **Establishing Delegates.** Careful consideration should be given to the selection of delegates responsible for VHA Daily Mail at each facility. The delegates should be the same people who currently process routine information. ***NOTE:** Instructions on how to set up a delegate using Outlook are included as Attachment A.* Delegates' personal mailboxes must reside on the same Exchange Server as the local VHA Daily Mail mailbox.

c. **Alternative to Personal Computer Terminal Systems (PCTS).** This mechanism will be used as an alternative to PCTS after PCTS is discontinued at the end of May 1999. PCTS is used primarily for distribution of vacancy announcements.

d. **Sending Messages to VHA Daily Mail.** Messages should be sent as text with no or very few graphics whenever possible. Sending attachments to VHA Daily Mail should be kept to a minimum to avoid overwhelming the Exchange network with many large messages. All messages addressed to VHA Daily Mail must be queued for transmission after hours to avoid overwhelming the VA wide area network with non-urgent messages. To queue a message to be delivered after hours, click on the View menu before sending the message and then select Options. In the Options dialogue box, select "Do not deliver before" by putting a checkmark next to the prompt and then select the date and time in the window following the prompt. (Keep in mind what time zone the message is originating in, and what the delivery time will be in the recipients' time zone. Those on Eastern time should not deliver messages until at least 9:00 PM.)

e. **Anonymous Messages.** The VHA Daily Mail mailbox will not be used to generate anonymous messages. No one should ever receive a message where the "From:" line indicates a generic mailbox. Delegates will not be able to reply to any message received in the VHA Daily Mail mailbox, but will be able to forward messages to others. Recipients of the forwarded message will see the delegate's name in the "From:" line as "John Doe sent on behalf of VHA Daily Mail".

f. **Message Distribution.** Staff with responsibility for monitoring the facility VHA Daily Mail mailbox should be encouraged to use Outlook rules to facilitate routing of messages. Senders should be encouraged to specify the recipient category in the subject line, to further assist with dissemination of information. For instance, an informational message concerning payroll could include "Payroll" in the subject; those monitoring the messages could have a rule established that specified if the subject contains the word "Payroll", it is automatically forwarded to the people in the Payroll Section. Other suggested subject line categories are:

- (1) Human Resources (HR),
- (2) Infection Control,

- (3) Fiscal,
- (4) Public Relations,
- (5) Primary Care ,
- (6) Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO),
- (7) Safety, and
- (8) Police and Security.

g. **Electronic Document Management System (EDMS).** In the future, when the generic mail mechanics have been successfully implemented, VISNs and medical centers will be given the option of receiving controlled correspondence items from the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) via email. Currently, EDMS documents are sent to most facilities by fax. However, EDMS has the capability to send documents by email to the facility's generic mailbox. Emails from EDMS will reflect "VACO EDMS2" as the sender. EDMS emails will include both action items and routine "information only" items, but routine items will be identified with the phrase, "FYI – Information Only" in the subject line of the message.

7. Technical questions may be addressed via Exchange to the distribution list "VHA Enterprise Management Center." Questions about message content should be referred to the message originator.

R. David Albinson  
Chief Information Officer

Attachment

**DISTRIBUTION:** CO: E-mailed 5/27/99  
FLD: VISN, MA, DO, OC, OCRO, and 200 - FAX 5/28/99  
EX: Boxes 104, 88, 63, 60, 54, 52, 47, and 44 - FAX 5/28/99

## ATTACHMENT A

### INSTRUCTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR THE EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATOR

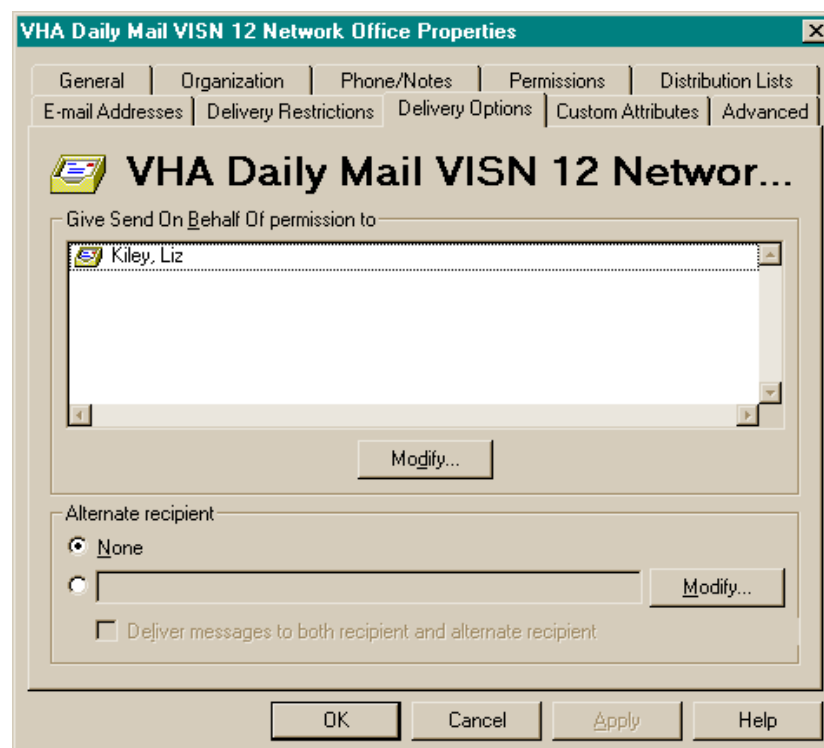
**1. Overview:** These instructions are intended for the Exchange Administrator. There are three steps to enabling the local *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox for use by appropriate delegates. Allow approximately 5 minutes per delegate to set up.

a. First, use the Exchange Administrator program to grant “Send on Behalf of” permissions for each of the delegates, to the local *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox.

b. Second, log into the local *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox using Outlook and grant folder level permissions to each of the delegates.

c. Third, help delegates to open the local *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox from within their Outlook session. Detailed instructions follow.

**2. STEP 1: Use Exchange Administrator to give “Send on Behalf of” permissions to intended delegates:** Use the Exchange Administration program to select the *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox listed in the Recipients container. Go into its properties by double clicking on it. On the general tab, give an Exchange Administrator’s NT account access to the mailbox by clicking the Primary Windows NT Account button and entering the appropriate domain and account. Select the Delivery Options tab. In the section titled “Give Send on Behalf of Permission to”, click the Modify button. The next dialogue box will prompt you for names from the global address list. Add all appropriate delegate mailboxes by highlighting their display names on the left and clicking the Add button to move the display names to the right. Keep in mind that each delegate’s mailbox must reside on the same Exchange site as the *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox. Click OK when finished. Click OK again to exit the mailbox properties. A sample Delivery Options tab follows:

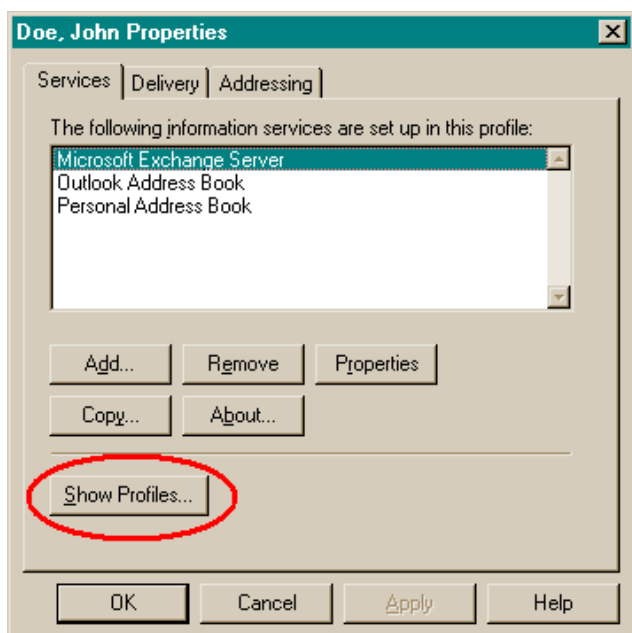


**3. STEP 2: Log into the local VHA Daily Mail mailbox using Outlook and grant folder level permissions to each of the delegates.**

**NOTE:** It is important to follow these instructions to limit which folders will be available to the delegates. The delegates should see only the Inbox and the Deleted Items folder under the local VHA Daily Mail mailbox. Hopefully, this will avoid any confusion as they will not see the Calendar / Contacts / Journal / Notes / Sent Items / Tasks folders from within the VHA Daily Mail mailbox. Folder-level permissions can be assigned only by following these instructions which include launching Outlook using the VHA Daily Mail mailbox profile and changing the properties on the folders.

a. Log on using the NT account that is the Primary Windows NT Account for the VHA Daily Mail mailbox. Establish a new Outlook profile for the VHA Daily Mail mailbox by going into Control Panel and then selecting Mail or Mail and Fax. What follows are graphics showing how to add a profile in Outlook, to be used for logging into the VHA Daily Mail mailbox.

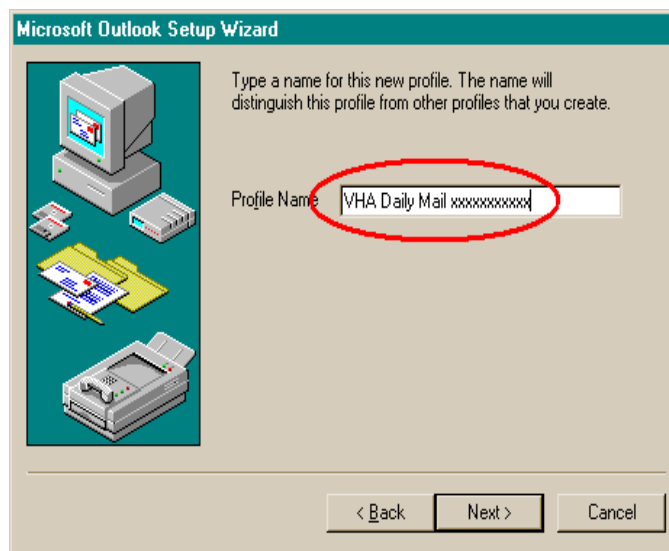
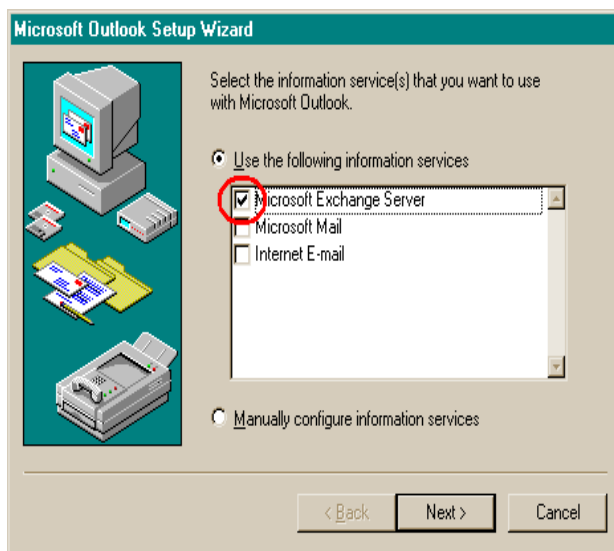
b. Click on the Show Profiles button.



Click on the Add button.



c. Answer the prompts as depicted in the graphics:



**Microsoft Outlook Setup Wizard**

**Microsoft Exchange Server**

Please enter your Microsoft Exchange server and Mailbox name.

Microsoft Exchange server:  
VHA12EXC1

Mailbox:  
VHA Daily Mail\VISN 12 Network Office

< Back   Next >   Cancel

**Microsoft Outlook Setup Wizard**

**Microsoft Exchange Server**

Do you travel with this computer?

☐ Yes  
☒ No

If you choose Yes you will be able to read and compose mail while not connected to a network.

If you choose No you will only be able to read and compose mail when connected to the Microsoft Exchange Server via a network or modem.

< Back   Next >   Cancel

**Microsoft Outlook Setup Wizard**

**Personal Address Book**

Enter the path to your personal address book. If you do not have a personal address book, click Next, and one will be created for you in the following location.

Microsoft\Outlook\Daily Mail.pab   Browse...

< Back   Next >   Cancel

**Microsoft Outlook Setup Wizard**

Would you like to automatically run Microsoft Outlook when you start Windows?

☐ Add Outlook to the Startup group  
☒ Do not add Outlook to the Startup group

< Back   Next >   Cancel

**Microsoft Outlook Setup Wizard**

Done!

You're now ready to use Microsoft Outlook with the following information services:

Microsoft Exchange Server  
Outlook Address Book  
Personal Address Book

< Back   Finish   Cancel

**Mail**

General

The following profiles are set up on this computer:

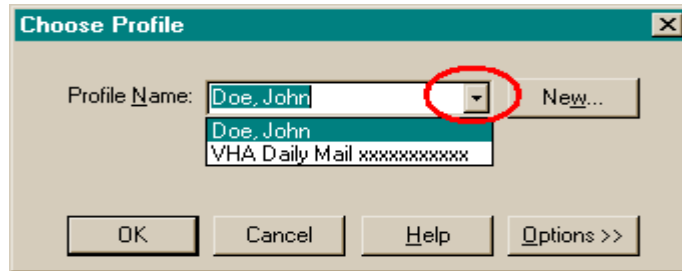
Doe, John  
VHA Daily Mail xxxxxxxxxx

Add...   Remove   Properties   Copy...

When starting Microsoft Outlook, use this profile:  
Doe, John

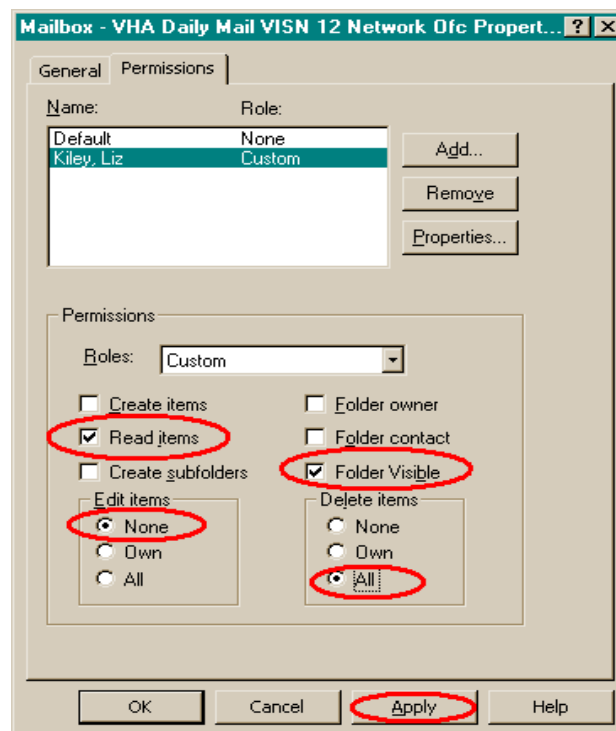
Close   Cancel   Apply   Help

d. You are now ready to launch Outlook using the newly-created profile, to log into the local *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox. Once logged in, grant folder-level permissions to the intended delegates. Launch Outlook and select the newly created “VHA Daily Mail xxxxxxxxxx” profile by clicking the down arrow and highlighting it. Then click OK. An example follows:



e. If you do **not** see the “Choose Profile” dialogue box (as shown above), cancel out and launch the Mail or Mail and Fax icon in Control Panel. Click on the “Show Profiles” button and at the bottom of the next dialogue box is a prompt for “When starting Microsoft Outlook, use this profile:”. Change it to the “VHA Daily Mail xxxxxxxxxx” profile and click the Close button. Exit Control Panel and then launch Outlook again.

f. Once in Outlook, go to the View menu and select “Folder List”. Next, grant folder-level permissions. The permissions need to be granted to three folders; the **Mailbox-VHA Daily Mail** parent folder, the **Inbox** folder, and the **Deleted Items** folder. All three are done in the same manner by highlighting the folder, right clicking on the mouse, and selecting Properties. Highlight the Mailbox – VHA Daily Mail parent folder, right click on it, and select Properties. In the Properties, select the Permissions tab. Next, add in the names of the delegates by clicking Add (on the Permissions tab), and selecting all appropriate names from the global address list. Change the permissions for each delegate to match the following graphic and click Apply:





Click the OK button when all appropriate mailboxes are selected. Click OK again, to exit the “Mailbox-VHA Daily Mail” folder properties.

g. Repeat the same steps for the “Deleted Items” folder. Highlight the Deleted Items folder, right click on it, select Properties and then select the Permissions tab. Next, add in the names of the delegates by clicking Add (on the Permissions tab), and selecting all appropriate names from the global address list. Click the OK button when all appropriate mailboxes are selected. Change the permissions for each delegate to match the above graphic and click Apply. Click OK to exit the “Deleted Items” folder properties.

h. Repeat the same step for the “Inbox” folder. Highlight the Inbox folder, right click on it, select Properties and then select the Permissions tab. Next, add in the names of the delegates by clicking Add, on the Permissions tab, and selecting all appropriate names from the global address list. Click the OK button when all appropriate mailboxes are selected. Change the permissions, for each delegate, to match the above graphic and click Apply. Click OK to exit out of the “Inbox” folder properties.

i. Exit the Outlook client.

j. To avoid any possible interruption of mail service for the local *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox, use the Exchange Administration program to go back and edit the Primary Windows NT Account for the local *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox. Use a resource account or any account that won't be deleted or deactivated. It can always be changed back to a current administrator, if needed, to modify delegates. (The reasoning is that when administrators leave, their accounts will move with them, be deactivated or deleted. This could interrupt message delivery to the facility *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox.) To complete this task, use the Exchange Administration program to select the *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox listed in the Recipients container. Go into its properties by double clicking on it. On the general tab, assign a resource account access to the mailbox by clicking the Primary Windows NT Account button and entering the appropriate domain and account.

### **STEP 3: Assist delegates in opening the *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox from Outlook.**

a. On the delegate's workstation, go into Outlook. Click on the Tools drop down menu, then select Services. Select “Microsoft Exchange Server” and then click the Properties button. Select the Advanced tab and in the “Mailboxes” section, under “Open these additional mailboxes”, click the Add button and type in the name of the local *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox, in full. Click OK. Click OK again to exit the Microsoft Exchange Server Properties dialogue box. Click OK once more to exit the Mailbox Properties.

b. As soon as the *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox has been added for the delegate, it should appear on his or her Outlook folder list. It will appear in alphabetical order, collating with the delegate's own mailbox. Open the *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox for the delegate and ensure that only the Deleted Items and Inbox folders are viewable. Show the delegate that clicking the plus (+) next to the *VHA Daily Mail* mailbox name will expand mailbox to display all folders and clicking the minus (-) will collapse the mailbox. That's it!

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